

How His Finger Print Sent Him to the Electric Chair

The Almost Uncanny Precision with Which the Identification Expert Pursues the Murderer with Convincing Proofs from Which There Is No Escape



Thumb-point Impression (Exact Size) Found on the Blood-stained Shirt of the Murdered Victim and Photographic Enlargement With All the Individual Peculiarities and Characteristics Numbered. (From the Finger Print Magazine, Chicago.)

WHOSE hand held the pistol that fired the shots which snuffed out the life of Miss Edith Janney and her fiancé, Arthur L. Kupter, one night last Summer in a New Jersey suburb of New York?

A fingerprint was the only clue. But it was enough.

Working from this faint impression science was able to unerringly pick out the hand of the murderer from the 105,000,000 people of the United States and build up a complete and perfect case. Because of that fingerprint George Brandon has been sentenced to die in the electric chair this month.

The public has heard in a vague way more or less about the value of fingerprints in the detection of crime, but the editor of the Finger Print Magazine, of Chicago, has printed the following detailed story of just how the modern fingerprint expert proves his case, which is an instructive and enlightening article, well worth reading. This is not a record of murderer Brandon's case, but is from a similar case and presents a vivid picture of how the modern fingerprint expert gathers his material at the scene of the crime, studies his evidence, finds the mysterious criminal and finally unfolds the whole story of the crime before the jury.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY VS. JOHN LEVANDOSKI.

Sure Indictment—Murder.

Counsel for Defendant—Small & Sharp. For the State—Prosecutor, Assistant Prosecutor.

A. A. Gribbin, sworn.

By the Prosecutor: QUESTION—What is your name?

ANSWER—A. A. Gribbin.

Q. You are a detective connected with my office?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you made a study of the science of identification, by means of finger prints?

A. I have.

Q. I show you a white shirt, from the bosom of which a piece has been cut. Can you say to whom this shirt belonged, and by whom and for what reason the piece was taken?

A. The shirt is one that was worn by Bronislaw Kooka, at the time he was shot and killed, January 1, 1919. I removed this shirt from the body, and cut the piece from the bosom, in the presence of Detectives Brown, Jones and Smith. I cut the piece from the shirt because it had upon it a finger print made in blood.

Q. I desire to offer this in evidence. I show you a piece of white starched linen, with a bloody finger mark upon it. Do you know what it is, and where it came from?

A. It is the piece that I cut from Kooka's shirt.

Q. Take this piece, and see if it fits in the vacant space in the shirt.

A. It does, exactly.

Q. This piece is marked A2. I show you a photograph, marked A2, and an enlargement, marked A3. Can you tell just what they are, and what they represent?

A. A1 is the piece that I cut from Kooka's shirt on the night of January 1, 1919, as he lay on the floor of the kitchen in the house at which he boarded, after he had been shot and killed. A2 is a photograph of this print that was found on exhibit A1, which is the piece of shirt, and taken in the presence of Detectives Brown, Jones and Smith. A3 is an enlargement of the photograph, made in my presence and

in the presence of the same detectives by Mr. Frost, photographer.

Q. I show you a small print, marked B1, a photograph, marked B2, and an enlargement marked B3; can you explain what they are, or what they represent?

A. B1 is an impression of the left thumb of the defendant made by means of printer's ink, upon a white piece of paper, in my presence and in the presence of Detectives Brown, Jones and Smith. The exhibit B2 is a photograph of this thumb print, made by me in the presence of these same detectives, and B3 is an enlargement by Mr. Frost, photographer, made in my presence, and in the presence of the same detectives.

By the Prosecutor:

If the Court please, I desire to offer these exhibits in evidence.

Q. Will you explain your reason for photographing these impressions, why they were enlarged and what they represent?

A. I made the photographs of the impressions because they exactly reproduced the ridges upon the inner surface of the first joint of a human thumb, one made in blood on a piece of linen, and the other made in ink upon a piece of white paper. I had the enlargements made so that the lines could be readily and plainly seen without the use of a magnifying glass.

Q. What do these prints show that they were made by one or more persons?

A. They show that the prints are identical, and were made by the same thumb of the same person.

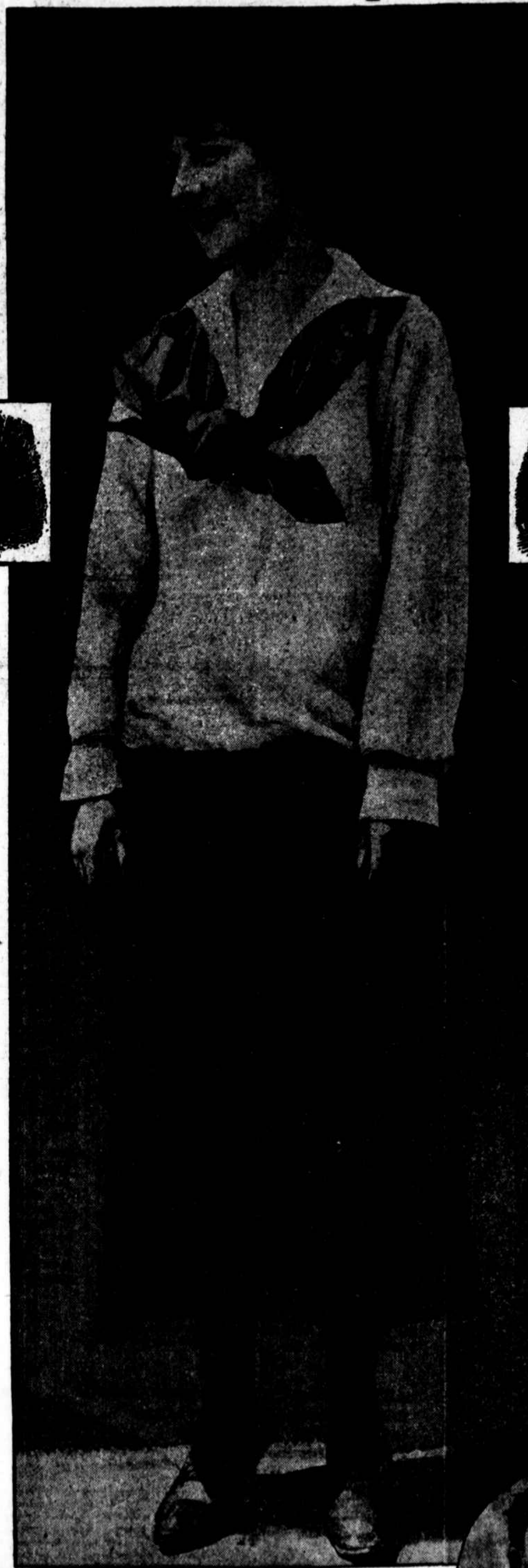
Q. Just explain what you mean by finger prints, how you reached the conclusion that both prints were identical, and that they were made by the same person at different times.

A. The finger print expert has only facts to consider; he reports simply what he finds. The lines of identification are either there or they are absent. If two prints are identical in every particular, they were made by the same person. If they are different, they were not made by the same person.

No matter how many finger print experts may be engaged in the labor of comparing two prints, their verdict must be the same.

Our system of identification is dependent upon the ridges or hair-like lines that appear upon the under surface of the first joint of fingers and thumbs, and the forms or patterns that the combined ridges assume. We have names for these patterns such as ulnar, radial, inner and outer loops, inner, outer and meeting whorls, arches, tented arches, central pocket loops, lateral pocket loops, twinned loops and accidentals.

We have also a method of classification by which numerical values are given to combinations of the patterns appearing upon the fingers and thumbs of both hands. By looking at the under surface of your finger tips you can, no doubt, see these little lines, and that they do twist and turn so as to make a pattern or design. These little ridges, as their name indicates, are raised above the surrounding flesh, and when covered with a natural oily secretion, blood, ink or other liquid or semi-liquid substance these ridges will be reproduced upon the object or surface with which they are brought into contact. These patterns in combination with the characteristics to be found in every print, as in two prints made by different persons, never duplicate. I will now take up the two prints before us and will point out for your benefit the characteristics that are identical. This pattern is of the Ulnar loop type



Miss Edith Janney, One of the Victims of George Brandon.

having twenty ridges intervening between the core and delta. The print is of the left thumb.

Compare the cores of these two prints (marked One on the enlargements). An island is formed by the bifurcation of the core ridge. This is one of the best points of comparison in a pattern, as it is relatively rare as compared with some of the other characteristics. Two and Three on the enlargements are abrupt ridge endings. The Court will please note the relationship of positions of these endings in both prints.

Four is a bifurcation showing in both prints and an unmistakable formation of identity. Five is a ridge dot forming the delta or outer terminus of this pattern. Six is an abrupt ending of the right-hand member or branch of the bifurcation.

There are many more points of comparison that I could use, consisting of short ridges, bifurcations and minor scars, but the characteristics already marked prove irrefragably the identity of the two prints.



Thumb-print of the Left Thumb (Exact Size) of the Suspected Murderer and Photographic Enlargement With the Peculiar Characteristics Numbered Showing How They Correspond With the Enlarged Impression Taken from Blood-stained Shirt.

Four, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven and Twelve are abrupt endings. Although the abrupt ending type of characteristic is quite common, its position in the print is of great importance.

Follow up each of these abrupt endings and note that they appear in identically the same position and have the same formation.

Thirteen is a cicatrix or scar left by a cut. Note that it appears in the same position in both prints, and intersects the same number of ridges.

Fourteen and Fifteen are abrupt endings. Again please note the position and formation of these characteristics.

Sixteen is a ridge dot, a very good and rare point of comparison and therefore very valuable.

Seventeen, Eighteen, Nineteen and Twenty are abrupt endings. Twenty-one is a cicatrix. Again note the identical position and size in both prints.

Twenty-two, Twenty-three, Twenty-four, Twenty-five and Twenty-six are abrupt endings. Twenty-seven, Twenty-eight and Twenty-nine are three bifurcations. They appear in exactly the relative positions in both prints and have exactly the same formation.

These last three formations are considered unmistakable points of identity. Thirty, Thirty-one and Thirty-two are abrupt endings.

Thirty-three and Thirty-four are two bifurcations immediately surrounding the core and adjacent to each other. They are formed in the same manner in both prints.

Thirty-five, Thirty-six and Thirty-seven are abrupt endings. Thirty-eight is a bifurcation. Thirty-nine is an abrupt ending. Forty is a bifurcation. Forty-one is a cicatrix. Forty-two is a peculiarity I wish the court would pay especial attention to.

This is a cicatrix and when viewed invertedly is an exact graphic reproduction of the numerical figures two and four (24). This last characteristic if considered alone is absolute proof of the identity which exists between these two prints.

Forty-three is an abrupt ending. Forty-four, Forty-five and Forty-six are bifurcations, three more very good points of comparison.

Forty-seven is an abrupt ending. Forty-eight is a bifurcation. Forty-nine and Fifty are two abrupt ridge endings.

There are many more points of comparison that I could use, consisting of short ridges, bifurcations and minor scars, but the characteristics already marked prove irrefragably the identity of the two prints.

George Brandon, Murderer, Whose Finger Print Has Brought Him to the Electric Chair.

Special Enlargement of "Characteristic Forty-two."

Q. How do you know but that the print found on the dead man was not made some time previous to his death?

A. When I cut the print from the shirt the blood was still moist.

Q. You say that you handled the body; how do we know but that it is not your finger print?

A. That is quite impossible. I know the pattern of my left thumb, and it is not like the finger print under discussion.

Q. What do you call the pattern on your left thumb?

A. It is an Ulnar Loop.

Q. And what do you call the pattern on the left thumb of the defendant?

A. It is also an Ulnar Loop.

Q. What's that? What did you say? Both patterns are the same?

A. Yes, the general form of the pattern is the same, but there is no resemblance between the prints.

Q. Do I understand you to say that the are unlike, and still they are alike? Now what do you mean?

A. While the patterns are alike as to form, the characteristics are so unlike that even a person not versed in this science could readily detect the difference.

For instance, the core in the defendant's thumb is a rod bifurcating and ending in a spur; the core of my thumb is a plain staple. The delta in his thumb is a dot. In mine it is formed by the splitting of a single ridge. The number of ridges intervening between the core and delta in his thumb are 22. In my thumb but 6 are shown.

By the Court: Have you completed your examination of this witness?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, if it please your Honor, but I retain the privilege of calling him back later.

By the Court: Witness is excused.

The prisoner was convicted. And similarly young Brandon was convicted on the evidence of the finger print experts and will pay the penalty in the electric chair.

